

# FineBooks & COLLECTIONS



AUCTION

— GUIDE —

— SPRING 2015 —

New York City  
Debut

★  
Bonhams  
★

★  
Swann Galleries  
★

★  
Christie's  
★

★  
Auctionata  
★

Having Fun With *Fine Books*!

There is simply nothing like the thrill of being at an auction. An item has come up for sale, and you want it!

The bidding begins low, and you nervously raise your hand. Then, just as quickly, you are outbid. Your mind begins to process what just happened. This is the book you wanted, and now, you’re in a heated competition for it.

You raise your hand again, capturing the current high bid. All the while you are processing what might be a realistic price to pay. But, during your thoughts...you’ve been outbid again!

Alright, you think, I’m buying this book. Hand up again, and you are the high bidder.

The room is silent for a minute and the auctioneer says loudly, “Going once!”

Another bid—not yours! You sigh.

You fling your hand in the air. The high bid is yours! In the background, you finally hear “Sold!” and the auctioneer asks, “Your number?”

You have won. You proudly hold your number in the air. Others look at you and nod approvingly. You are elated, and tonight you’ll be savoring every page of your purchase.

This special edition of *Fine Books & Collections* is published in the hopes of stimulating your interest in upcoming auctions. It is presented in partnership with four trusted members of the auction community, Bonhams, Christie’s, Swann Galleries, and Auctionata.

We want you to get excited about this important part of collecting. And even if you can’t attend an auction in person, please visit these auction partners online, sign up for a catalog, and see what they have to offer. Being on their mailing list can grow your knowledge significantly!

By all means, if you haven’t already done so, engage in *Fine Books & Collections*, both in print and online. You’ll find much, much more about collecting and enjoy the support of many more resources—book-sellers, auction houses, exhibits, fairs, classes, clubs, and more.

Visit *Fine Books* online at [www.finebooksmagazine.com](http://www.finebooksmagazine.com).

See you at the next auction!

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FINE BOOKS & COLLECTIONS

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Auction Guide

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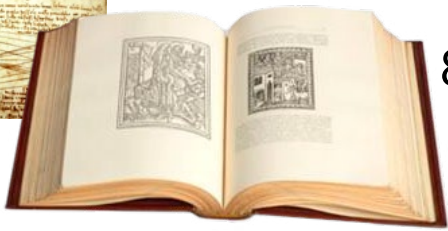
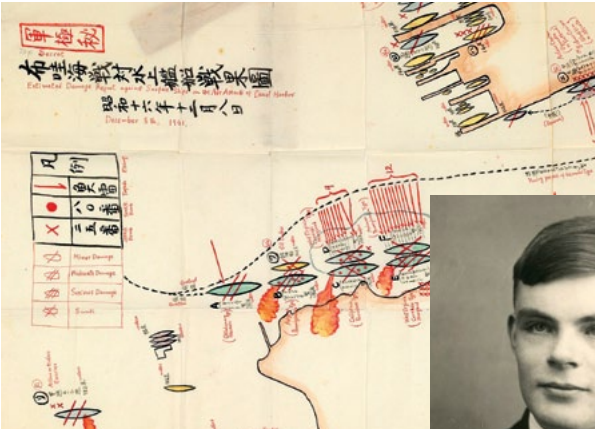
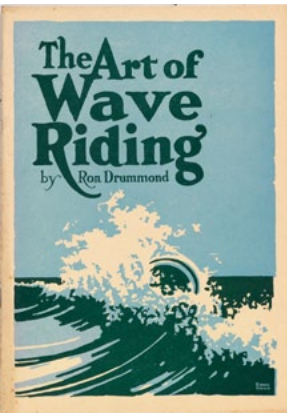
Rare  
NYC Book  
Week  
APRIL  
7-15  
2015



ON THE COVER

Central Park, New York City, in spring makes an excellent spot to catch up on auction events. Illustration by Terriana.

COURTESY OF THINKSTOCK





# Examining the Past to Understand the Present

Auctions explore art and literature, WWII, and the frontiers of space.

In 2015, the Fine Books and Manuscripts department at Bonhams will focus on twentieth century materials: The Fine Books and Manuscripts sale (April 13), the Space History sale (April 21), the World War II 70th Anniversary sale (April 29), Voices of the Twentieth Century sale (June 16), the History of Science sale (November 8), and Conflicts of the Twentieth Century sale (November 9). Each will examine artifacts from pivotal moments of our recent history whose effects are still felt today.

Perhaps the single most exciting item heading to auction this spring is a notebook kept by British codebreaker Alan Turing, which will be part of the April 13th sale in New York City during Rare Book Week. Turing wrote in this notebook while working to crack the German Enigma cipher machine during World War II. In his will he left the fifty-six page manuscript to his close friend Robin Gandy. The notebook has never been seen in public—Gandy kept the manuscript hidden at his home until he died. The notebook provides exceptional insight into the mind of

the man widely recognized as the father of computing. This item alone is expected to fetch seven figures, and has already stirred keen interest among collectors. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to charity.

The field of Space History is attracting new interest from collectors as well, and Bonhams' upcoming sale will include manuscripts, photographs, and artifacts from space programs around the globe. Vintage NASA photographs, a flown Russian space-suit, Buzz Aldrin's activation checklist from the Apollo 11 mission, and a large collection of material from astronaut Alan Bean will be among the items available on April 21st.

Manuscripts, printed material, photographs, battlefield ephemera, and militaria from both the European and Pacific Theaters will appear at the World War II sale. Highlights include Enola Gay co-pilot Robert Lewis's diaries and official logbook and an Omaha Beach D-Day landing craft. A rare SG-41 "Schlüsselgerät" German coding machine from 1944, a Japanese officer's sword captured at the last banzai

charge on Iwo Jima, and an official copy of the Japanese surrender documents are among items that survived the Second World War and are now on the auction block.

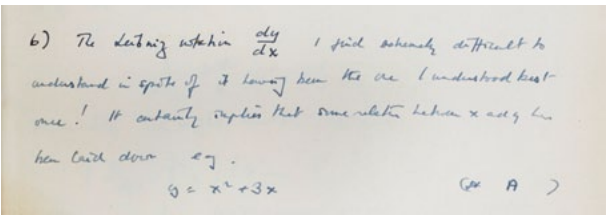
A showcase of art, literature, and music will dominate the Voices of the Twentieth Century sale much like last year's inaugural Twentieth Century auction, where Bonhams offered archival lots that included original artwork by Russian constructivist architect Yakov Chernikov and a collection of Chinese photographs from the early

History of Science sale featuring discoveries and innovations. Rounding out the books and manuscripts sales will be the Conflicts of the Twentieth Century sale. This auction will examine the ten major international wars that occurred from 1901 to 2000. Revolution and social unrest will be the key topics here, with items from global revolutionary and independence movements.

By decoding and preserving items from the past, Bonhams' upcoming book and manuscript auctions offer



Alan Turing at age sixteen.



A detail image of Turing's manuscript.

1900s. Culturally significant archives and manuscripts from around the globe will be available again this year.

In the second half of 2015, Bonhams will continue to focus on the last one hundred years, with another

a unique way to better understand the present and to forge a path towards an exciting future.

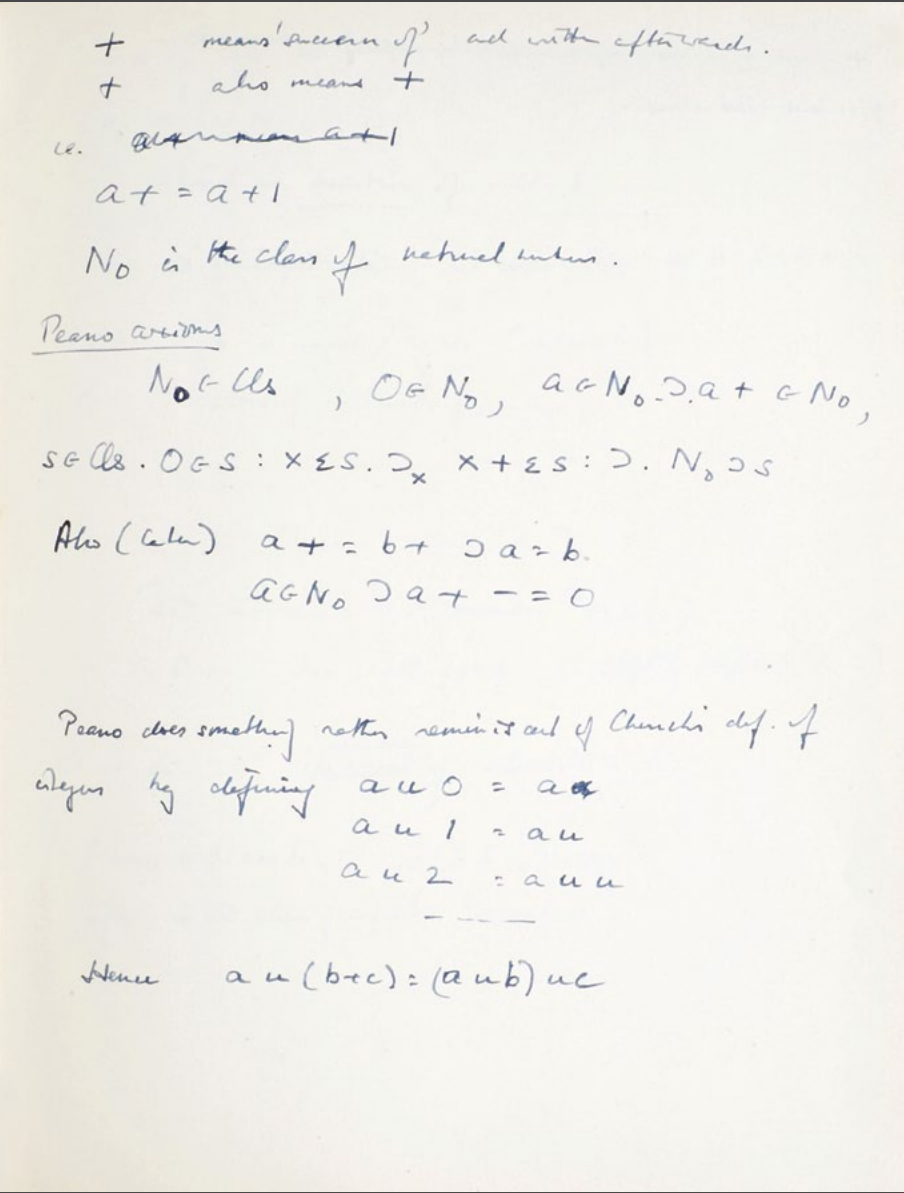
Writer, translator, and lifelong bibliophile Barbara Basbanes Richter taught French and Latin in Northern Virginia for seven years before moving to New York, where she now writes.

## FINE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

April 13, New York  
Consignments now invited

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ALAN TURING  
Autograph Manuscript on the foundations of mathematics and computer science, 56 pp, c.1944. Almost certainly the only extensive Turing manuscript extant. Estimate upon request



Bonhams



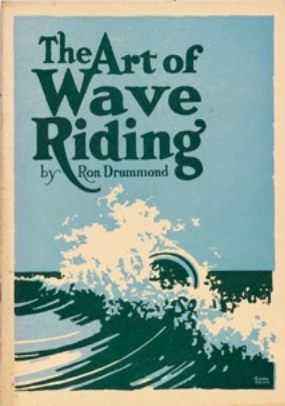
Swann Auctions:  
Bookends for the  
NY Antiquarian  
Book Fair

Before and after sales promise  
a special week.

Springtime in New York heralds the return of the New York Antiquarian Book Fair (NYABF) and the start of the new auction season. This year, in addition to hosting two book and manuscript auctions before and after the fair, Swann Galleries also welcomes Rick Stattler as director of its book department. Stattler led Americana auctions at Swann before being appointed director, and has exciting plans for its future: “We’re hoping to continue the growth of Swann’s book department over the coming year. A run of successful sales has brought in exciting new material, and we’re able to be a bit more selective in what we offer.”

Stattler also explained the rationale behind hosting two sales around the New York Antiquarian Book Fair. “It’s a wonderful chance for out-of-town collectors and dealers to come to a preview, or attend the auction in person. We’ve done this for a few years now, and it generates a positive response.” While Swann representa-

tives can’t attend much of the NYABF themselves, the auction house lined up two very strong sales for prospective book buyers.



Ron Drummond, *The Art of Wave Riding*, Hollywood, 1931. Estimate \$2,000 to \$3,000. At auction April 14, 2015.

The Early Printed, Medical, Scientific and Travel sale takes place on April 9th and will offer a wide range of materials. The *Sphinx mystagoga* (1696) is Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher’s Latin translation of hieroglyphic inscriptions on a sarcophagus discovered in Egypt. This first edition includes an interpretation of religious iconography on funerary arti-



Athanasius Kircher, S.J., *Sphinx mystagoga; sive, Diatribe hieroglyphica*, 1696. Estimate \$1,500 to \$2,500. At auction April 9, 2015.

facts and explains Egyptian burial practices and beliefs. Written almost two hundred years before Jean-François Champollion deciphered the Rosetta Stone, Kircher’s interpretations are completely incorrect, but are nonetheless a wonderful example of work by a man considered to be a leading scholar of his time.

Another highlight includes the complete manuscript of Peter Lombard’s *Sententiarum libri quatuor* (“The Book of Four Sentences”). Originally written in the twelfth century, this manuscript dates from 1463, almost 300 years after Lombard’s death. It is a compilation of his addresses to members of the church. Lombard was elected Bishop of Paris in 1159, and it is believed that these speeches were completed before he assumed the episcopacy.

The auction house is also handling the estate of New York book collector Milton Slater (1918–2014), who started buying with Swann in 1953. “He had an enormous col-

lection and an excellent eye, most of it being Americana and autographs, but we’ve found wonderful material for almost every department at Swann, ranging from illustration art to maps,” said Stattler. Some of Slater’s mate-



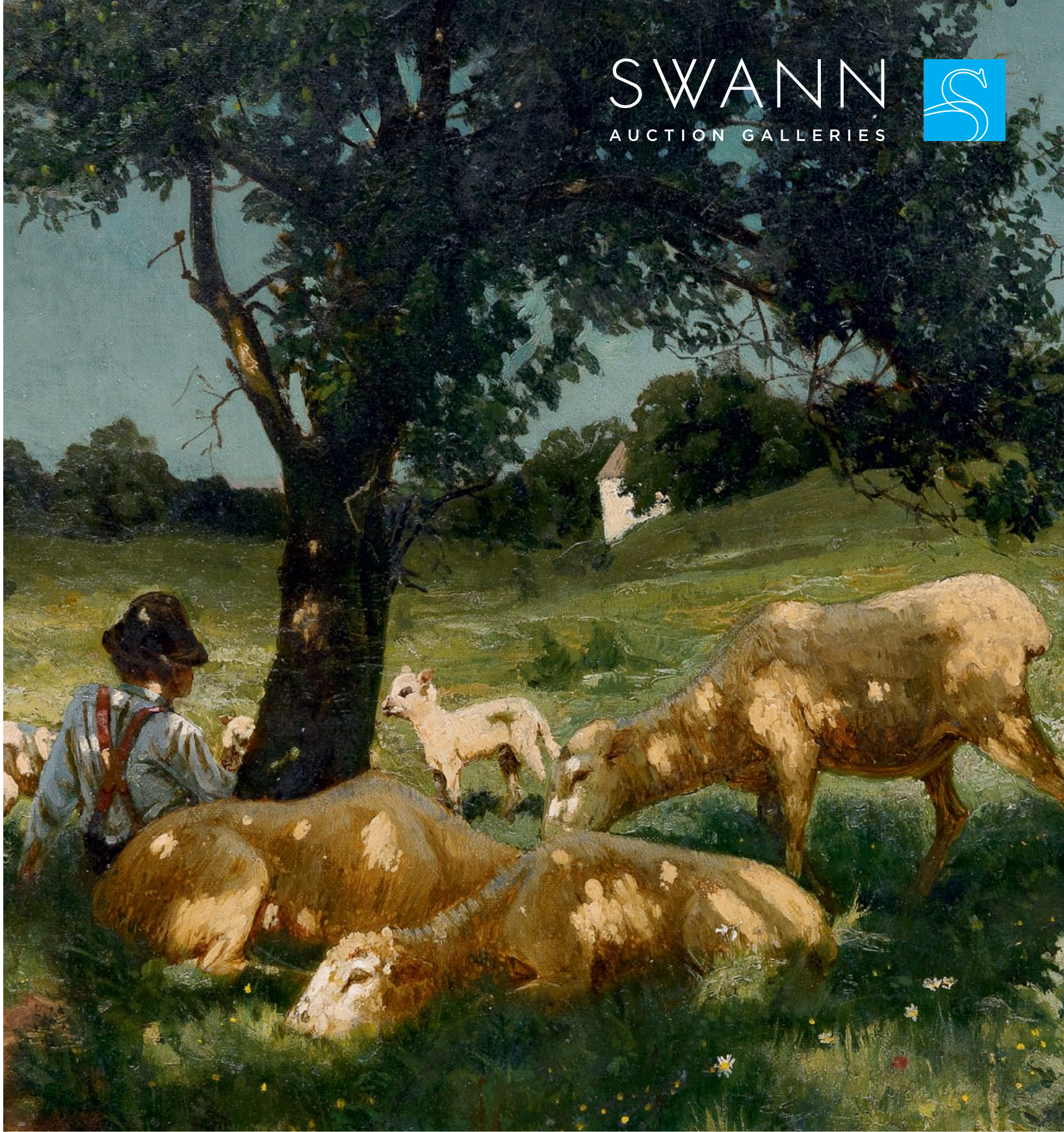
Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiarum libri IV*, manuscript in Latin on paper, Bohemia, 1463. Estimate \$30,000 to \$40,000. At auction April 9.

rial will be auctioned on the book fair weekend, such as a Gutenberg Bible leaf on April 9, and a first-edition Book of Mormon (among many other lots) on April 14. More of his collection will appear at auction this fall.

Founded in 1941 as an auction house specializing in Rare and Antiquarian Books, Swann is now the largest specialist auctioneer of Works on Paper in the world, conducting approximately 40 sales a year. Swann Galleries remains a touchstone of the New York auction scene as a provider of unique and culturally significant items, and its book sales are a time-tested rite of spring in the Big Apple.

Writer, translator, and lifelong bibliophile Barbara Basbanes Richter taught French and Latin in Northern Virginia for seven years before moving to New York, where she now writes.

IMAGES COURTESY OF SWANN GALLERIES.



WINTER / SPRING 2015 AUCTION SCHEDULE

104 East 25th Street  
New York, NY 10010  
212 254 4710  
SWANNGALLERIES.COM

Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Boy and Sheep Under a Tree*, oil on canvas, 1881. Estimate \$200,000 to \$300,000. At auction April 2, 2015.



Perpetual Motion

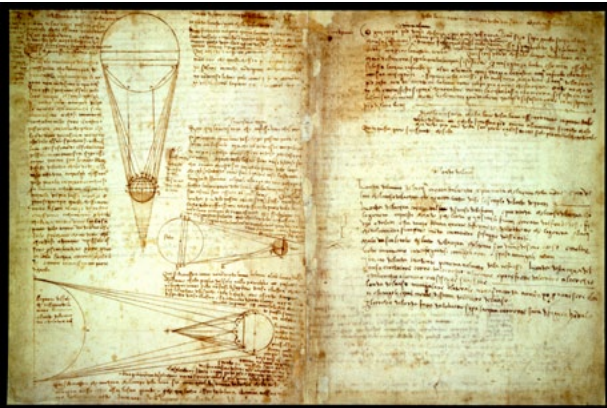
As a contemporary of Isaac Newton and John Locke, Huygens' annotated work has traveled the globe.

Christie's team of experts in the Books and Manuscripts department have brought many of the world's rarest items to the global auction market, including the \$30.8 million record-breaking sale of Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Hammer*. Much of that expertise was made evident during the December 4th sale of Christiaan Huygens' (1629–1695) annotated *Horologium oscillatorium sive de motu pendulorum ad horologia aptato demonstrationes geometricae*, which fetched an astonishing \$965,000, with pre-sale estimates between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

Published in 1673, the *Horologium* illustrates how Huygens constructed the first pendulum clock. A Dutch mathematician and horologist, Huygens' work was inspired by Galileo's experiments with pendulums half a century earlier.

This example is noteworthy because it was Huygens' personal annotated copy, and the only example known to be recorded on large paper (other copies are shorter and on lighter stock). The title page showcases an ornamental royal armorial woodcut, followed by a full-page woodcut of Huygens' pendulum. One hundred woodcut illustrations of pendulums

appear throughout the text. Over twenty pages are annotated in Huygens' own hand, showing corrections on numbers, letters, words, and even reworking geometrical figures. His addition of almost 130 words in a single passage was subsequently printed in a 1728 edition of his complete works, the *Opera reliqua*.



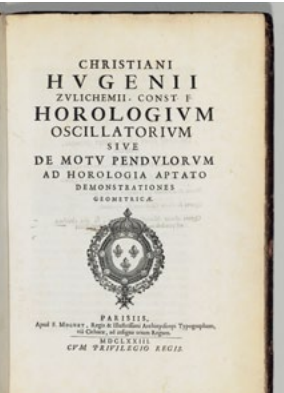
LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Codex Hammer*. Estimate: \$12,000,000–18,000,000. Price Realized: \$30,802,500. Christie's New York, November 11, 1994.

Galileo worked on pendulum clocks in the early 1600s and discovered the theory of perpetual motion. He also discovered the principle of isochronism. Isochronism was a major discovery because it meant that a clock could now reliably tell time. Yet Galileo never built one. Huygens studied Galileo's work, and his complicated mathematical formulas determined that pendulums with large swings were not entirely isochronous.

Huygens solved the problem by limiting the length of the pendulum's swing. These studies, which are recorded in the *Horologium*, include a discussion on the laws of motion, the properties of curves, and thirteen theorems on circular motion.

Accurate pendulum clocks revolutionized how people across the world kept time, especially aboard ships where timekeeping determined longitude. Traditional clocks were often disturbed by a ship's movement, and Huygens designed a marine chronometer that included a balance wheel and a spiral spring. Existing timepieces in public places were retro-

up with English mathematician and noted botanist Israel Lyons, whose signature dated 1763 is on the front flyleaf. Austrian book-dealer H.P. Kraus acquired it next, and it came to Christie's from a Massachusetts-based collector. Initial pre-sale estimates put the *Horologium* between \$150,000–\$200,000. The hammer price of \$965,000 demonstrates Huygens' continued significance in both the collecting and scientific realms, and the impor-



HUYGENS, Christiaan (1629–1695). *Horologium oscillatorium sive de motu pendulorum ad horologia aptato demonstrationes geometricae*. Paris: F. Muguet, 1673. Estimate: \$150,000–200,000. Price Realized: \$965,000. Christie's New York, December 4, 2014.

tance of preserving original scientific documents. Christie's distinguished tradition of market-leading sales remains in perpetual motion, with upcoming Spring 2015 auctions including a sale of *twentieth-century comic strips and illustrations* in Paris (March 14) and a sale in London (April 23) that will include *books and manuscripts* dealing with travel, science, and natural history.

Writer, translator, and lifelong bibliophile Barbara Basbanes Richter taught French and Latin in Northern Virginia for seven years before moving to New York, where she now writes.

COURTESY OF CHRISTIE'S

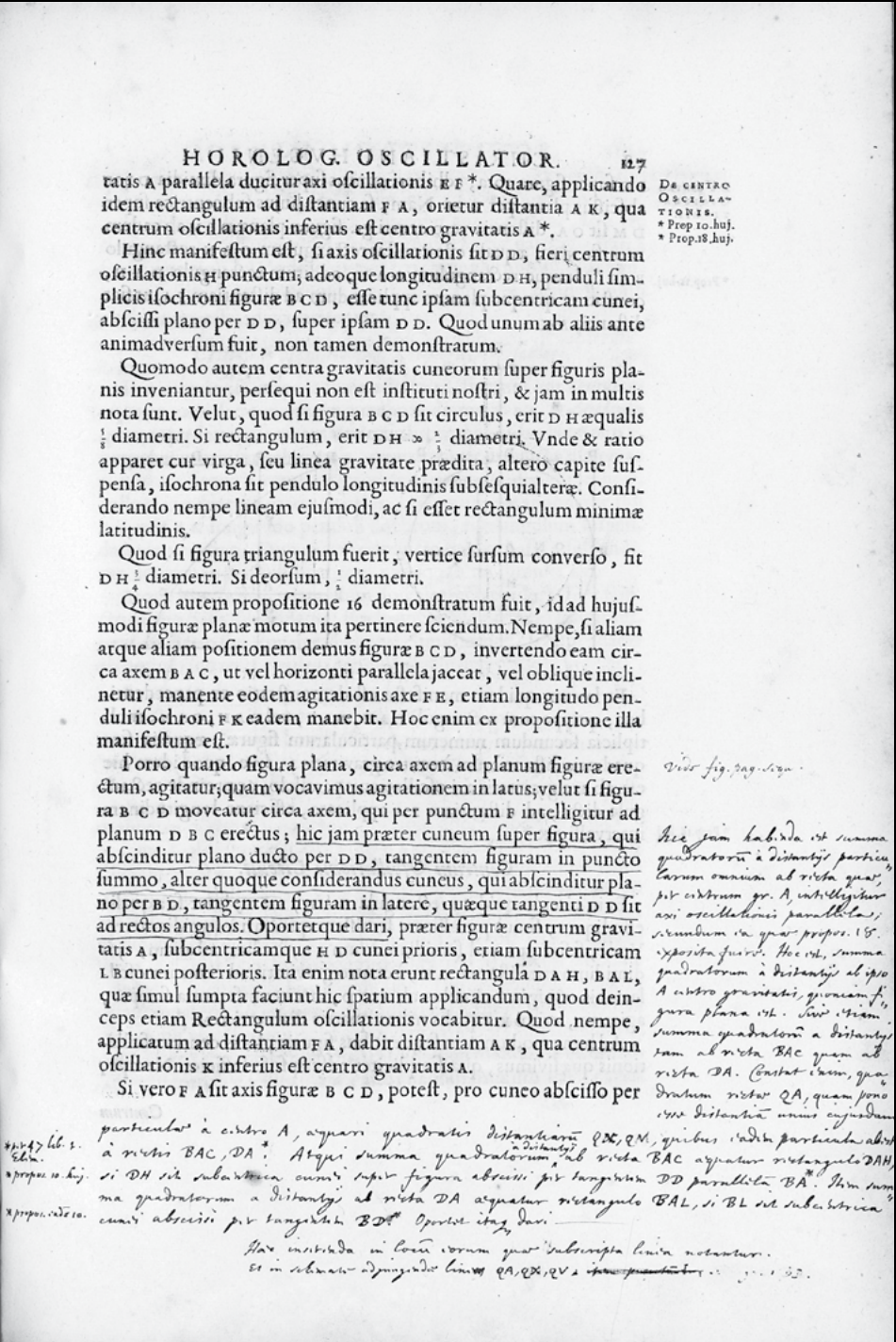
FINE PRINTED BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

New York · June 12, 2015

Viewing June 6–11 20 Rockefeller Plaza New York, NY 10020

Contact Tom Lecky tlecky@christies.com +1 212 636 2665

HUYGENS, CHRISTIAAN (1629–1695). *Horologium oscillatorium sive de motu pendulorum ad horologia aptato demonstrationes geometricae*. Paris: F. Muguet, 1673. The author's own annotated copy. Estimate: \$150,000–200,000. Price Realized: \$965,000. Christie's New York, December 4, 2014



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## Berlin-Based Auction House Makes a Splash in New York

Auctionata settles into The Big Apple.

Online auction house **Auctionata** recently set up a broadcast studio and office in New York and will be hosting its inaugural book sale this spring. The Berlin-based startup provides global access to live-stream auctions of fine art, antiques, and collectibles, and a New York presence will further its ability to reach the U.S. market.

Auctionata maintains broadcast studios in Berlin and in New York—from which it live-streams auctions and offers real-time information on the bidding activities and an ability to place bids from anywhere in the world. The company brings the thrill of a classic live auction right into bidders' living rooms. (Bidders wishing to examine objects offline are always welcome to arrange a pre-auction viewing.)

Here's how the online auction process works: once registered, a customer bids via computer, tablet, or mobile device as lots come up for sale. Clients can also place bids over the phone, or send written absentee bids before the sale takes place. "We combine the ease of online bid-

ding with the connoisseurship clients expect from traditional auction houses," says Alli Arnold, specialist—head of sale at Auctionata's New York office.

Auctionata specialists and experts value, inspect, and sell for clients. Since its inception in 2012, Auctionata has processed more than 50,000 valuation requests valued at over \$150 million dollars.

*Utudes Sur L'Art de la Gravure Sur Bois a Venise. Les Livres a Figures Venitiens de la fin du XVe Siecle et du Commencement du XVIe.*



Spring 2015 brings an exciting milestone for Auctionata: On March 30th, the auction house will host its **inaugural book sale** in New York. Arnold is optimistic about the event: "Over the long term, we're interested in presenting customers with as many high-quality books as possible, featuring many finely printed art books." Some of the lots will be similar to recent online sales, like the three-volume set of Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert's *Natural History of Plants and Minerals* which sold for €495. Published in the 1880s, the *Natural Histories* include numerous colored plates of exotic plants and wild beasts. The March sale will feature a stunning six-volume set of Victor Masséna Prince D'Essling's *Utudes Sur L'Art de la Gravure Sur Bois a Venise. Les Livres a Figures Venitiens de la fin du XVe Siecle et du Commencement du XVIe.*

Celebrated French book-binder Léon Gruel bound these books, his craftsmanship evident in the full terracotta morocco leather binding and decoratively stamped brown and gilt pictorial cam-eos of gryphons. Each volume includes its color pictorial wrappers, with the top edges covered in gilt. These bindings retain their vibrancy, making this set a splendid acquisition for collectors interested in bindings by Gruel. This lot is being offered at \$5,000.

"New York is a fantastic place for book auctions, it's a hub of the publishing world, and we're excited to be a part of it," said Arnold. "Keep an eye out for Auctionata, because this will be the first of many New York book sales."

Writer, translator, and lifelong bibliophile **Barbara Basbanes Richter** taught French and Latin in Northern Virginia for seven years before moving to New York, where she now writes.

## AS BEAUTIFULLY CONSTRUCTED AS ITS CONTENT.



A study of Venetian engraving practices, these volumes feature exquisite Old Master etchings. With gilt covers and fine leather binding, one art form honors another. Prince D'Essling, 'Utudes Sur L'Art de la Gravure Sur Bois a Venise.' 1907-1914. 6 Vols. **Estimated Price \$5,000.**

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**Mar 30, 12 pm EDT**  
Join our live stream auction

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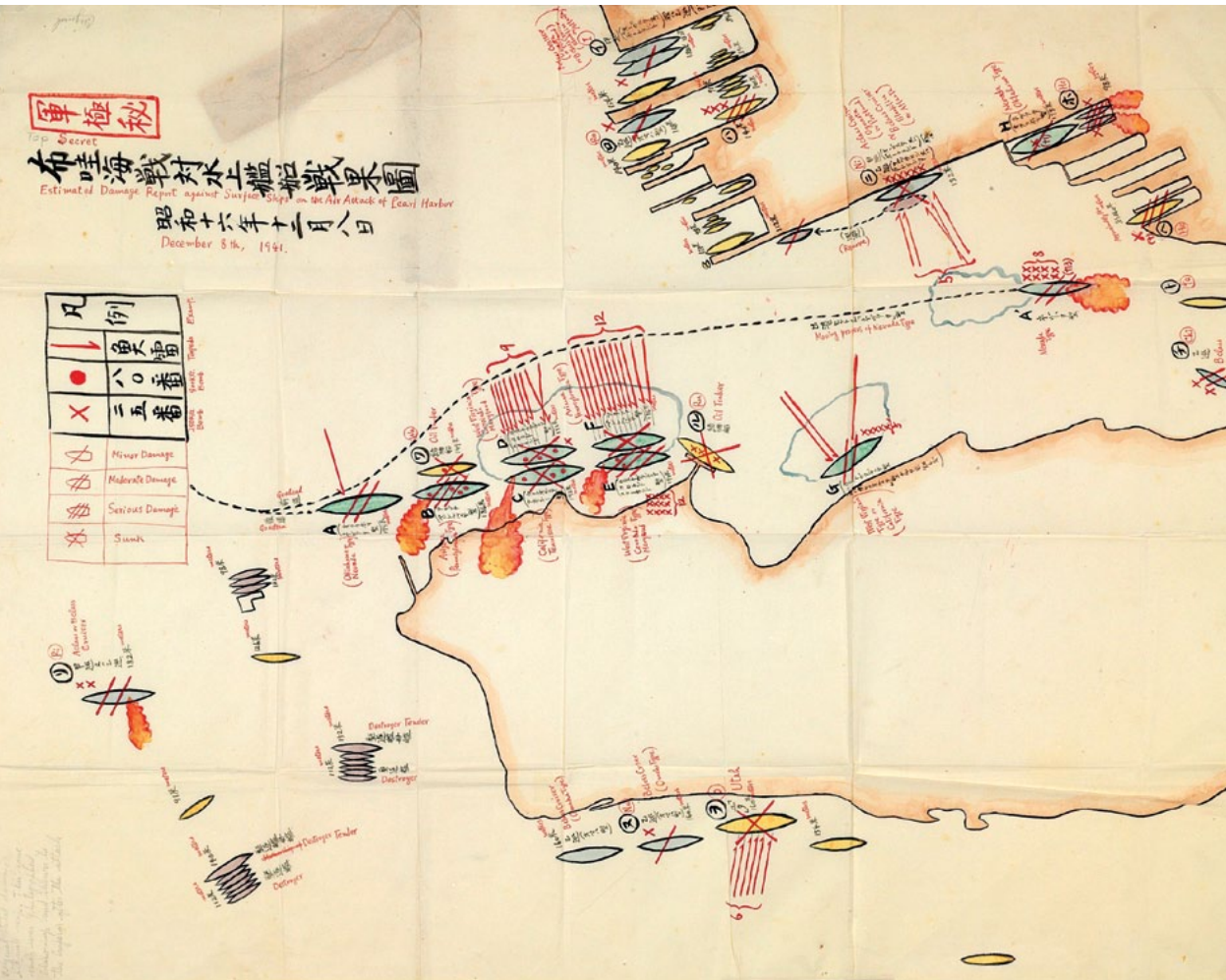
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BY IAN MCKAY // A WIDE WORLD OF BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS, MAPS, AND FINE ART RECENTLY SOLD AT AUCTION

Tora! Tora! Tora!

Pearl Harbor Battle Damage Report, \$425,000 at Christie's New York on December 6.



Drawn up in the immediate aftermath of the 'Day of Infamy,' this plan is the work of Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, who led the carrier-based aircraft that attacked the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on a quiet Sunday morning in December 1941. It was Fuchida who gave the famous radio signal "Tora! Tora! Tora!" to confirm to his commanders that complete sur-

prise had been obtained.

Boldly marked 'Top Secret,' the hand-drawn map includes keys to the types of munitions used and damage inflicted. Torpedo tracks are rendered in red and bomb impacts with crosses. American vessels, even small craft, are carefully shown and nearly all identified in Japanese and English captions. Fuchida

has also drawn billowing explosions and flames issuing from six vessels.

Once owned by Gordon W. Prange, an historian attached to MacArthur's Far East Command who interviewed Fuchida in 1947, and sold last December as part of the Forbes family collections, the map first came to auction in 1994 at Sotheby's New York and sold then for \$321,500.

Incunable World History

Hartmann Schedel, Liber Chronicarum, Koberger, Nuremberg, 1493, €96,300 (\$108,500) at Auctionata in Berlin on November 20, 2014.

This remarkable volume of the Nuremberg Chronicle would, for some, be among the top printed books. Publication of the Nuremberg Chronicle, written in Latin by Hartmann Schedel, broke new ground with its combination of illustration and print on the same page. Its publisher, Anton Koberger, was regarded as the most successful publisher in Germany and parts of Europe. He was also the godfather of Albrecht Dürer, who likely contributed to this work.

Hartmann Schedel, himself a collector of books and art, was a German doctor, historian, and cartographer. His work on the Nuremberg Chronicle, likely commissioned by Koberger, became some of the first printed maps of many cities, including Bamberg, Breslau, Cologne, Konstanz, Lubeck, Munich, Nuremberg, Passau, Prague, and others. This remains the first and only Latin edition of the Nuremberg Chronicle. An included world map after Pomponius Mela shows the world before the discovery of America.

Publication of this book in the dawn of western printing promised to bring such information to a new audience. Koberger actively marketed his books, sending agents into the field to booksellers and developing subscriptions to his publications. He owned papermills and at one point employed more than one hundred craftsmen.

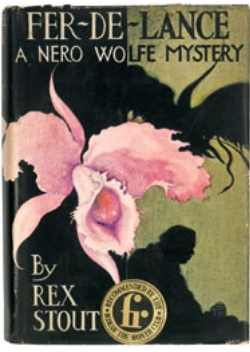
Liber Chronicarum is regarded as the most sophisticated and most expensive book project of the fifteenth century. With its lavish illustrations and well-documented past, it is a book for the ages. —Editors

Enter Nero Wolfe

Rex Stout, Fer-de-Lance, \$21,250 at Swann Galleries New York on November 21.

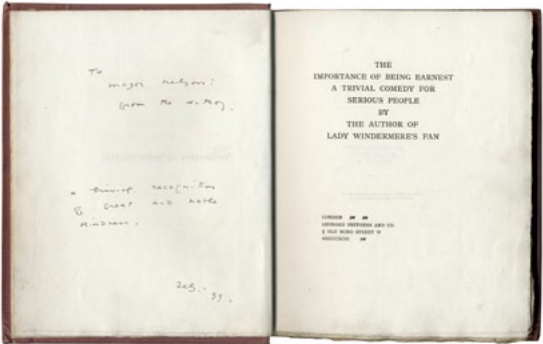
A collection of Stout's books offered in New York included a rare copy in a pretty good, unrestored jacket of his first detective novel. This 1934 book introduced his hugely popular, overweight ["one seventh of a ton"], and sedentary but brilliant detective, Nero Wolfe, and his assistant, the man who does the legwork, Archie Goodwin.

There was a little fading to the spine, a few chips, and a small loss to the letter R in the title, but it was 2002 when the last jacketed copy of Fer-de-Lance came to auction and sold for \$10,755 as part of the fine detective fiction collection of Dr. Richard M. Lackritz, at Christie's New York.



Reading in Gaol

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, £55,000 (\$91,755) at Bonhams London on June 18.



In original mauve cloth gilt, this was one of 100 large paper copies of the 1899, Smithers edition that Wilde inscribed as a "trivial recognition of your great and noble kindness" to Major James Ormond Nelson, governor of Reading Gaol, where he had been incarcerated following his famous 1895 trial on charges of indecency.

Henry Isaacson, who was running the prison when Wilde arrived, had denied him any access to books and forbade him to talk, but Nelson, his replacement, adopted a very different attitude. Wilde biographer Richard Ellmann notes, "One of Nelson's first acts was to go up to Wilde and say, 'The Home Office has allowed you some books. Perhaps you would like to read this one. I have just been reading it myself.' Wilde melted into tears."

Major Nelson, whom Wilde later described as "the most Christlike man I ever met," provided ink and paper so that he could start writing again, and the result was the posthumously published De Profundis.

The copy of The Ballad of Reading Gaol that Wilde inscribed for Nelson is in the New York Public Library collections.



# 'How many stars?'

*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, \$125,000 at [Christie's](#) New York on June 19.

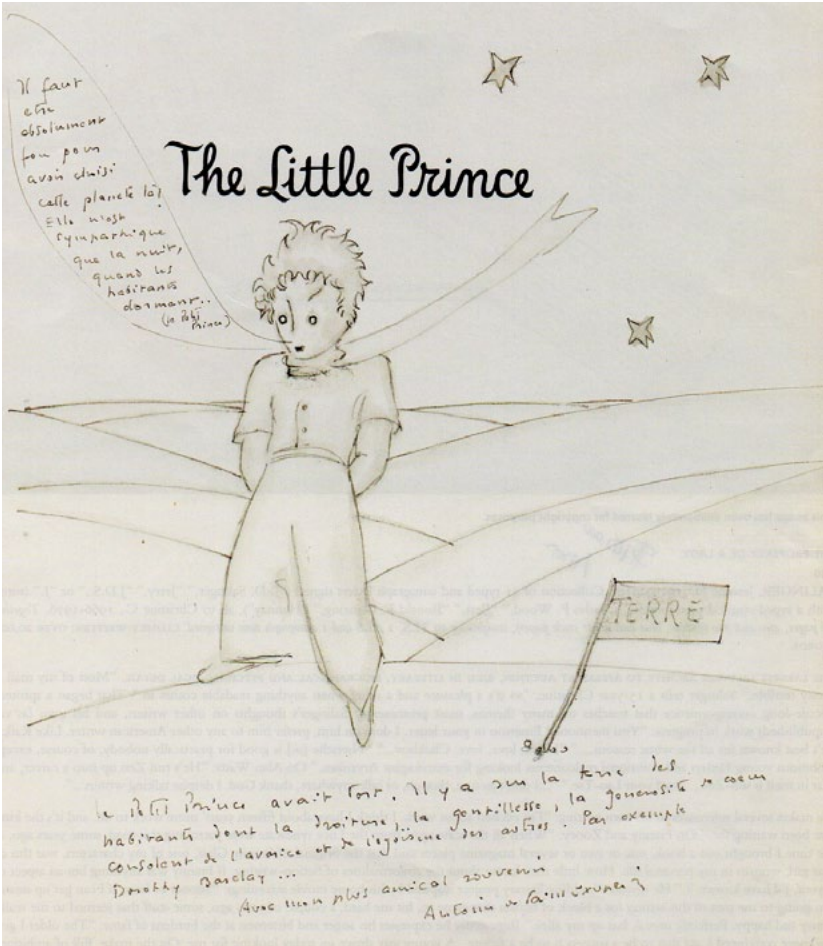


## The Snowflake Man

Photomicrographs of snowflakes, \$22,500 at [Bonhams](#) New York on June 4.

Many of the ninety-eight images that made up this collection, each 4" x 3," were curling at the edges and around half of them were faded, but that did not seem to matter. Working from the family farm near Jericho, Vermont, and using a bellows camera attached to a compound microscope, Wilson Bentley took his first photograph of a snowflake in 1885 and over the following decades, having perfected the process of catching flakes on black velvet so that images could be captured before they melted, he went on to produce over 5,000 images.

'Snowflake' Bentley wrote the entry on snow for the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in 1931, in collaboration with William J. Humphreys of the U.S. Weather Bureau, published *Snow Crystals*, a work illustrated with 2,500 photographs and still in print. Somewhat ironically, Bentley died of pneumonia that same year, contracted after walking six miles home in a snowstorm.



Another of the summer's record-breakers was an inscribed presentation copy of the 1943, U.S. first edition of this beloved story that included the original ink and watercolor drawing seen here.

In a speech bubble, the Prince remarks [in French], "You'd have to be completely crazy to have chosen this planet. It is only pleasant at night when the inhabitants are asleep," to which the author added, "The Little Prince was wrong. There are on earth some inhabitants whose straightforwardness, sweetness, and generosity of heart make up for the avarice and egotism of the others. For example, Dorothy Barclay ... With fondest remembrance Antoine de Saint-Exupéry."

The Little Prince's question, "How many stars can be seen from the Earth?" had originally been put by Saint-Exupéry to a friend, *New York Times* reporter Helen Lazeroff, who passed it on to a young assistant, Dorothy Barclay. The Hayden Planetarium in New York City helped Dorothy with the query, and in gratitude for her efforts, Saint-Exupéry gave her this rare inscribed copy.

The English language edition was published just as Saint-Exupéry was preparing to leave New York to serve as a pilot in the Free French Air Force in North Africa and Corsica, but in July 1944 he disappeared on a reconnaissance mission over the Mediterranean.

# Animal, Vegetable, Mineral

A natural history collection of three volumes by Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert €495 (\$550) at [Auctionata](#) in Berlin on November 19, 2014.

In antiquity, natural history concerned anything related to nature. By the nineteenth century, it evolved into a scientific study of biology, geology, and more. The public moved in concert with men and women of science in their deepening appreciation of the world around them. They sought books such as these to expand their worldview.

These three volumes include the works 'Naturgeschichte des Tierreichs für Schule und Haus' (8th edition, 1886), 'Naturgeschichte des Pflanzenreichs nach dem Linnéschen System' (4th edition, 1887), and 'Naturgeschichte Geologie. Mineralreich. Paläontologie.' (4th edition, c. 1888). The books were published by J. F. Schreiber in Esslingen. Lavishly illustrated, together the three volumes contain nearly two hundred plates with colored illustrations and woodcuts.

These books were sold in the original illustrated cloth bindings with black and gold embossing on the spines and red or green edging. The lifelike illustrations include splendid colors and explanatory text. The books are quarto volumes: 33 x



23 cm, overall width: c. 10 cm.

As was the case with Schubert, science was often explained in theological terms. The son of a pastor, Schubert began his studies in religion, and it never failed to influence his work. He moved between disparate sciences through-

out his life, having completed his masterpiece, *Symbolism of Dreams*—a work that influenced Hoffmann, Freud, and Jung—in 1814.

Schubert concluded his career in 1853, being awarded the honorific title of privy councilor. He died in 1860. —Editors

## Bacon's Rebellion

*The Widdow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia* by Aphra Behn, \$4,750 at [Swann Galleries](#), New York, on April 8, 2014.

A work of 1690 to which Dryden provided a preface, this is said to be the first play set in Britain's American colonies and this copy in a later cloth binding, it seems, was the first seen at auction since 1964. A laid-in facsimile replaced a missing leaf, there were both ink and blind library stamps present, together with a number of ownership inscriptions, but scarcity served it well.

Lest there should be any misunderstanding, Nathaniel Bacon was the real life commander of a volunteer force of Indian fighters who, in 1676, succeeded for several months in overthrowing the colonial government of Sir William Berkeley, and the work is "a highly fictionalized drama of Bacon's Rebellion." The title character, the young and wealthy widow Ranter, puts on men's clothes and fights in several battles. 📖

Ian McKay's weekly column in *Antiques Trade Gazette* has been running for more than thirty years.

